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(54) Title: SILYLATED OLIGONUCLEOTIDE COMPOUNDS

(57) Abstract: Oligonucleotide comprising at least one internucleotide phosphorus atom protected with a group of formula $-X^aSiR^3R^4R^5$ provided. X^a represent O or S, and R^3 , R^4 and R^5 each independently are optionally substituted hydrocarbyl groups, selected such that that total number of carbon atoms in R^3 plus R^4 plus R^5 is 4 or more. Process for the preparation of these oligonucleotides, intermediate compounds useful therein, and process for the preparation of the intermediate compounds are also provided.

WO 2004/085454 A1